

Retired Governors Newsletter

In co-operation with
The Prison Governors
Association



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EDITORIAL

The Newsletter is now based at Risley so please note our new address. Your editor is enjoying his change of job, particularly as Risley is now a Training Prison for males as well as remaining a Local Prison for females.

MAILING LIST

Among recent additions to our mailing list are Larry Stones (Governor Il Sudbury) and Jack Reynolds. We also welcome Judy Gibbons, a former Deputy Governor of Styal now working for the Social Services in Wiltshire.

STRANGWAYS INCIDENT AFTERMATH

In the aftermath of the Strangeways incident I heard from a number of people who have not been in touch for a while - Ric Willis, ex AG in the sixties, now a Director of Social Services; John McCarthy; and John Lee (Deputy Governor of Hindley in the sixties).

I am also very grateful for the many letters of support I had from retired colleagues during the Woolf Inquiry hearings. The fifteen days of public hearings in Manchester were an unusual and demanding experience.

WOOLF INQUIRY

In addition to Gordon Lakes who is an Assessor to the Woolf Inquiry, a team of Retired Governors assisted the Inquiry during the summer. The team was Geof Lister, John Richardson, Brian Hayday and Don Long.

IN MEMORIAM

I regret to have to report the deaths of:

George Iles
Ron Cooper
Alan Packham
Jimmy Crawford.

Peter James recently wrote to me about Jimmy Crawford as follows:

"In case you have not been informed I write to say that Jimmy Crawford died after a long illness on 26 Sept 1990. I attended his cremation at Cambridge on 3 Oct 1990 and gave condolences on behalf of past colleagues to his widow Mary.

Jimmy ("Sailor") Crawford had a career, more varied than most Governors. He joined the Royal Navy at the age of 16 and on his discharge joined the Naval Base Police in Singapore. Later he transferred to Customs and Excise in British North Borneo and was interned by the Japanese from 1941-45. On joining the Prison Service Jimmy served at Gaynes Hall before proceeding in 1956 on temporary

transfer to the Singapore Prison Service where he was Superintendent of the huge Outram Road Prison in Singapore City. Later he was promoted to Deputy Commissioner of Prisons, Singapore and was the founder of Reformatory Training, closely modelled on the Borstal system, in Singapore.

He returned to the UK service in 1960 and served at Wormwood Scrubs, Reading and Ashford before being promoted to Governor Class III in charge of Lancaster. In 1969 he was promoted to Governor Class II at Blundeston before retiring in 1975 after 5 years in Suffolk.

A man of courage, tenacity and very high principles, Jimmy was a loyal good friend and will be sorely missed by all of those privileged to have known him."

New HQ and Area Organisation

A new HQ and Area Organisation came into being in September 1990. The Service continues to be headed by a Grade II Director General (Chris Train). Below him are Directors of Personnel and Finance; Director of Prison Medical Services; and Director of Buildings and Services. Then there are 3 "Operational Directors" at Grade III level. These are:

Director of Custody - Bill Innis
Director of Inmate Programmes - Brian Emes
Director of Inmate Administration - Ian Dunbar

These three have policy divisions and establishments working to them. Establishments are grouped into 15 areas of 9 establishments each. Each area is headed by an "Area Manager".

5 Areas are in each Operational Directorate - a little like 3 large regions - South East; North; and Midlands and South West.

The fifteen areas are headed up by Governor I or a new Departmental Grade of Assistant Director. Current areas and postholders are:

| | | |
|---|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| MIDLANDS & SOUTH WEST <i>Director:</i> <i>Ian Dunbar</i> | Central: | Mike Jenkins (A/D) |
| | Mercia: | Terry Bone (GI) |
| | Chilterns: | Arthur de Frising (GI) |
| | Wales and West: | John Wilkinson (GI) |
| | Wessex: | Bob Dixon (GI) |
| SOUTH EAST <i>Director</i> <i>Bill Innis</i> | East Anglia: | John Simmons (GI) |
| | Kent: | John Hunter (GI) |
| | London North: | Tony Pearson (in April 1991) (A/D) |
| | London South: | Ian Boon (A/D) |
| | South Coast: | Peter Kitteridge (GI) |
| NORTH <i>Director</i> <i>Brian Emes</i> | East Midlands: | Phil Wheatley (GI) |
| | North East: | Al Papps (A/D) |
| | North West: | Ian Lockwood (GI) |
| | Trans Pennine: | John Jones (A/D) |
| | Yorkshire: | Jim Blakey (GI) |

HQ is due to relocate to the Midlands around 1994.

As to how the new organisation works, we will all just have to wait and see.

PRISON GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

The PGA continues to make good progress with over 900 members.

To all our associate members, I am pleased to report that you will shortly receive the **PGA Diary** for 1991 with our compliments. We have also been able to negotiate a special insurance benefit for our Asso-

personal legal protection and a Homecare emergency service. This is a new initiative for the PGA and we would very much welcome feedback on whether associate members find it helpful.

RETIRED GOVERNORS' TIE

The PGA symbol modified for Retired Governors is now available. Please see the top of the Newsletter. Ties incorporating the symbol are available from Graham Smith, Governor V, Prison Service College, Love Lane, Wakefield at £4.50 (post paid). Ties are available in dark blue, maroon and black.

PGA Success in Personal Case of Retired Member

We were pleased to be able to report the following success for a recently retired member. Ron Wilkinson, recently retired G4 from Manchester, writes:

"I retired from Manchester Prison in February of this year, and arrangements were well under way for me to purchase the quarter we were occupying. I was advised by a colleague to have a Homebuyers' report on the property. I arranged this and received the report which included a valuation.

In February the district valuer visited, I gave her the opportunity to see the report, she was interested and read the summary and recommendations section. Prior to leaving she told my wife that whilst she could not tell us the valuation, she felt the report and valuation were realistic.

I received the department's valuation based on the valuer's report in March, the difference was in excess of ten thousand pounds and the difference was not in my favour. When my wife and I recovered from the shock I phoned Brendan O'Friel and he advised me to write to Lynne Bowles. I wrote to her and the department enclosing copies of the report. The following afternoon I was telephoned by Lynne offering me full support and a promise that she would be pressing the department for a revaluation of the property. As a consequence a senior member from the auditor's office visited and revalued the property much more in my favour.

The PGA has shown its teeth and is interested in the retired members. I can testify to this support.

May I take this opportunity of sending greetings and good wishes to all my friends and colleagues, both serving and retired, and urge you all to continue to support the PGA."

Ron Wilkinson

I must stress that there are limits to what the PGA can do for retired members, but I hope this part of the Newsletter demonstrates that you are not forgotten.

Editor.

PGA CONFERENCE 1991

PGA Annual Conference will be held at Newbold Revel from 12th -14th March 1991.

EXTRACTS FROM PRISON SERVICE NEWS

We again include a selection of items which have appeared in Prison Service News since the last issue of the Newsletter.

CURRENT DEVELOPMNETS

"The first reduction in the daily average population for sixteen years came in 1989. But it included an increase of 800 in the population of male offenders sentenced to over four years.

"Pilot schemes for new procedures for prisoners' requests and complaints began at Hull, Lindholme and Wakefield in the spring, prior to their general

introduction in September.

"For the first time the passing our parade for new officers at Newbold Revel was attended by their families and friends.

"Castington, The Mount and Wellingborough YOIs are to become Category C prisons.

"Campsfield House and Lowdham Grange are due to close by next April and Eastwood Park YOI and Northey by the end of 1992/3.

Distinguished Visitors

"The Princess Royal made the inaugural speech at the annual conference of Prison Visitors.

"The Home Secretary has visited Channings Wood and the new local prison under construction at Bellmarsh, near Woolwich. It is due to open in April 1991.

"One of David Mellor's last visits as Minister of State with responsibility for prisons was to Liverpool.

Personalities

"Canon Russell, Deputy Chaplain General, has retired after 27 years in the Prison Service Chaplaincy.

"John May (Governor of Dartmoor) and Alison Gomme (Governor 4 at Channings Wood) have been awarded Harkness Fellowships for a year's research/study in the United States. Ray Doughty, newly appointed Governor of Preston, has been awarded a Winston Churchill Travel Fellowship for a two months study of through-care practices in New Zealand.

Round the Establishments

"Askham Grange hosted 'Any questions' in April.

"A high-tech computerised Braille Transcription Unit is now operating at Gloucester.

"Downview prison (near Banstead) now has an all-weather sports field.

"The redevelopment of Strangeways (including the installation of integral sanitation) is aiming to produce 300 remand places in about 12 months and a further 670 places within three years.

"Chelmsford now has a new portacabin in the prison car park, provided by voluntary effort, in which inmates' visitors can wait until they are called forward (by intercom) to the main gate.

"Shepton Mallet now has a creche in the corner of its visitor centre.

"The old officers' mess at Wandsworth has been

gutted and adapted to provide a Methodist chapel and synagogue.

"Thirty years after opening the original Rye House at Dover borstal as an assistant governor, Gary Dodds (as Regional Director, South East) formally opened the new Rye House providing accommodation, with integral sanitation, for 100 inmates.

"Suffolk Punches are still being bred at Hollesley Bay YOI.

"This year's award of the Windlesham Trophy for the best kept prison garden has gone to Sudbury.

YOUR LETTERS

Sandal, Wakefield

I, like many others, will be deeply grieved at the death of Alan Packham, who was truly one of the Great Governors and a charming man.

And now, Arthur, may I wish you well after your operation - painful is a mild way of putting it - a friend of mine had a similar 'do' some months ago. I do hope you will be able to laugh freely in the near future.

Your news of the Service appals me - who the hell thinks these matters up? You may not remember it, but just after the war two or three non-experienced Governors. Mc' something or other was one. He lasted about twelve months but 'by gum' he caused some junior Governors some misery - Tony Meal was one. Fortunately I didn't get under his spell but was at the Scrubs when he was under training with Newcombe. So you see it's surfaced again. I wondered what Brendan was referring to. Mind you, tons of gold would not have got me into the London network.

If you do not object I will send your letter to Frank Ransley - he always feels very isolated - at 94 - and he is always asking me for prison news. I phone him fairly frequently and he never fails to ask about Gordon Fowler.

Now I thought some of my old colleagues may find the following extract from a local newspaper interesting. It was in the 'Wakefield Express' last month, although I found it darned hard work. Golf is a game of pleasure but never have I been so drained, especially after a 9 on a par 5, and a 7 at the 18th.

Best wishes and thank you all who make the Newsletter possible.

Sincerely
John Watson.

(Many thanks, John, for your letter and best wishes. May I also congratulate you on your success. You make us 'young uns' feel ancient. Keep it up if you can. I am glad to report all seems to be well after my operation. 'Roly' Attrill will no doubt be interested to know the Plumbing is working efficiently again. I had a blockage in the cold feed pipe from the supply tank and the 'Plumber' at the local hospital had to clear it out. Unfortunately the Circulatory Pump gave some trouble whilst the 'op' was taking place so the 'Plumber' had to call in help to get it working again. I knew all along I should never have left the trade. Judging what it has cost, 'Hospital Plumbers' are expensive these days.

Arthur Williamson)

The service news John refers to is the scheme due to come into operation after the end of September 1990. From then the Regional Offices will be closed, the Regions as we know them will be abandoned and no doubt the RDs re-employed elsewhere. In their place the Home Office will set up fifteen Areas, each under the control of an Area Manager (a terrible title to start with in my opinion). So far not too bad, you may say, as the regions were getting a little crowded. However, in his wisdom (or might I say, lack of wisdom), the Home Secretary planned to bring in some bright individuals from outside the service to fill the area manager posts. Who they were to be he didn't say - perhaps they were to be some of the service officers due to be made redundant and this would be in keeping with stated policy - or could they be 'party faithfuls', drafted in to prepare the service for selling off to the private sector should they be successful in the next General Election - at least, for the time being we are not to be told, as the Home Secretary has cancelled his plans - for now at least. It seemed these 'Whitehall Warriors' were to go through a training course and no doubt a few lectures on how to deal with unruly inmates and troublesome members of the POA. No doubt the training would also include a few 'brain picking' visits to various penal establishments, and then they would be deemed qualified to run the Prison Service. As we would all suspect - and I am certain you would all support - the real Professionals in this field, namely

the Prison Governors' Association, looked upon his proposals in a different light and quite correctly, but of course very politely, told the Home Secretary how stupid the idea is.

In a letter to the PGA dated 21 May 1990 he states: "I have carefully re-examined the organisation review issues, in the light of what you have said, and at the further discussion you had with David Mellor. I have also regard to our experience in April. (Clearly Strangeways frightened them at HO, and we all know what a complete mess they made of the riot.) I have therefore concluded that the decisions we (??) made should stand. (Now wait for it.) In the light of events in April I have decided to make one significant change in the arrangements to take place in September. As you know, it had been our intention to appoint a small number of area managers whose background lay outside the Prison Service. (Otherwise, they haven't a clue how to go on until you have taught them.) I am still of the view that an infusion of a few people with different and wider experience (in what field, one must ask - perhaps they are all experts in Group Counselling) would benefit the service. (Please don't start laughing at that statement; I feel sure Mr Waddington actually believes it.) But it is plain to me we must re-examine our plans for preparing such people and there is insufficient time between now and September to complete this re-examination, and to give them whatever preparation we conclude is desirable. I have decided therefore that all appointments to the 15 area managers posts will be made initially from people with experience in Governing Prison Service establishments. We would then seek to identify in due course two or three people who could be area managers when replacements were needed.

Most of you had in the region of twenty, to twenty five years experience in various types of establishments before you were even thought to be suitable to take over a single borstal or prison etc. One wonders just what exceptional talents these gifted persons will possess, as they are to be able to run several establishments immediately. At the same time I cannot see any honest reason to recruit them at all - I can only conclude it is summed up in one word - 'Politics'. Could it be the Prime Minister is simply trying to find jobs for the service officers she intends to 'bowler hat', or is it more likely to be that the government is having to follow her political dogma. If the latter is the case it is a very poor

reward for a service that has served the Crown faithfully and efficiently since the year 1878.

We are of course awaiting the publication of the 'Woolf' report on the Prison Service. I can just see the government's face if it turns out to be like the Clegg' report on pensions. If it is, Mrs T will not be at all pleased, but at least it would save the service from total destruction with nothing else but private profit behind it all. WATCH THIS SPACE FOLKS.

Arthur Williamson

London E3 5AL

I am writing to you on behalf of my mother to thank you most sincerely for the kind letter of condolence which you wrote her following the sudden death of my father.

Your letter was much appreciated, as my father had great affection for the Service. We were particularly grateful for the efforts of Colin Scott in arranging for Dartmoor to provide a bearer party. It was a very kind gesture and all the officers had served with Dad. He would have known he was among friends.

We were all very conscious of the difficult period you were going through at the time. That you should have found time to write to my mother was not lost on us and most certainly would not have been lost on Dad. It was sad that as a consequence of Strangeways a number of people were unable to attend the funeral, nevertheless it served to show to some of the mourners the very great responsibilities that members of the Prison Service have.

My mother is in good heart and is determined that life must go on. My father would wish it to and she would never let him down. They were a great team.

Thank you again,

Yours sincerely

Richard Ward (Lieutenant Colonel)

Wells, Somerset

Thank you once more for the Newsletter.

Would you kindly note my change of address. Andrew and I moved to this bungalow with some difficulty just a month ago and are very happy to be here under the circumstances. He went down with malaria in February this year whilst in Tanzania and was then attacked by a paralysing virus which

left him unable to walk.

After a period of two months in the East Birmingham Hospital he was discharged to me on crutches. I was in the midst of packing and all the other joys (?) of moving house, so it was all a little hairy. However, what with Andrew's courage and sense of humour, and tremendous support from friends and neighbours, we made it. I am delighted to report he is about 95% cured and waiting to get back to work and, more importantly, to acquiring some 'wheels' again. Although perhaps that is not the correct term to use as he did spend a lot of time in a wheelchair.

Thank you also for Mary Feathers' address. We are now 'in touch'.

I was saddened to hear of Alan Robertson's death and I have written to Dilla. We were at Lowdham together when Alan was Deputy Governor there. Dilla kindly wrote to me when Doug died.

What an amazing lady Marjorie Taylor is. I'm so pleased to hear she is out of hospital and will be writing to her.

All good wishes,

Yours sincerely

Betty Dennis

(We all hope you will be happy in your new bungalow and also wish Andrew a speedy return to full health. You have settled in a lovely part of the country. You will note in the next letter that Mrs Taylor has moved, but if you haven't already received her new address, we shall be happy to forward it to you.

WAW)

Prison Officers Selection Board,
190 Westgate End, Wakefield WF2 9AG

I saw Marjorie Taylor recently. She is of course the widow of Bill Taylor, one time Governor of Usk borstal. She moved in 1989 into Llanhennock Cheshire Home which has had a contact with Usk for many years.

She would like to go on receiving the Retired Governors' Newsletter.

Best wishes
Jack Smith

(Many thanks Jack for letting us have the address.

As you will see elsewhere, she is in touch with at least one retired Governor's family and I am certain there are others who will now drop her a line - at least, we hope so. WAW)

Shropshire

Please note following change of address.

As I now live at 'The Manse' it would seem appropriate for one rejoicing in the name of Prior.

I am working as a Lay Pastor with the Methodist Circuit in the South Shropshire are on the Welsh border - about as far from a Prison Service establishment as one could be.

Sincerely
Harold T Prior

Morpeth, Northumberland

I refer to the recent statement made by an HO official to the 'Woolf' Committee that he was not prepared to risk people being maimed or possibly killed by them storming Strangeways Prison during the riot there.

Why therefore go to the expense of training and equipping prison riots squads if they are not to be used when the need arises? The training the squads receive, together with their ability and common sense, would enable them to deal with any prison disturbance, if deployed quickly enough.

Together with John Bailey at Brixton, I developed the MUFTI system and this gave me more than a passing interest. I have no doubt at all that when the situations arise, the trained squads should be deployed in order to bring an effective and speedy end to disturbances, saving an enormous cost of restoration, to say nothing of preventing injury and possible deaths to inmates.

I am well aware of the risks to staff, but that risk is part of the daily duty, which I know they readily accept.

Sincerely
John Hughes

(I know almost all our readers will share your views on this subject John. It does appear however that the cost of restorations following riots in prisons is of no importance, providing it comes out of the 'public purse'. I just wonder if the same attitude will

persist should they sell off the prisons to the private sector. My bet is they will not be able to get 'Securicor' or some other similar private army in quick enough to safeguard their dividends. We must wait awhile now as no doubt there will be a 'repeat performance' before very long. If the current low level of staff morale is anything to go by, then just how much longer can the Home Office rely on loyalty??

Arthur Williamson)

(The following letter was received by Brendan before we were able to invite Mr Lewis to join 'our ranks'.

WAW)

Newcastle Emlyn, Dyfed

Having served in the Prison Service for over thirty-three years at various establishments including Wandsworth, Dartmoor and Albany, and retired in 1972 as Chief Officer I (the 'Anchor' rank) now apparently dispensed with, I find it difficult not to feel concerned about you and the Manchester staff during the recent troubles and the days following. A riot is terrible, the aftermath even worse.

It is obvious you have done your job with dignity, courage and are much respected by your staff, but seemingly Head Office is not as considerate as they should be. I was at the Parkhurst riot and recall Alistair Miller and how he was treated by the same body. So sad to understand that there are not so many 'Yeomen of England' left in high office.

I have watched you on television and feel certain it would have been a pleasure to have served with you. Take heart Sir, carry on regardless - and the truth will out, and this like all else will pass away. You have done your duty well, so do not give in to the dying light.

Seemingly, politics have now taken over from Common Sense.

Yours faithfully
D M Lewis, BEM ISM

(Brendan replied suitably and invited Mr Lewis to join us and receive future copies of the Newsletter. He replied as follows:)

Newcastle Emlyn, Dyfed

Thank you for your recent letter inviting me to receive the Newsletter.

In the issue you sent I was amazed how many of the members mentioned were known to me: Sid Powell, David Gould, Lionel Steinhausen, Marjorie Taylor, Bill Martin, Roger Dauncey and many others.

I served during the days of Alexander Patterson, Mij Lamb, Miss Brisley, George Stamp, Jack Beisty. Joined the service at Wandsworth in 1937 and retired at Albany in 1972 as COI.

Many thanks for inviting me,
Yours
D M Lewis, BEM ISM

Khandallah, Wellington, New Zealand

I am not too sure if you will remember a former colleague from the 1960s; I was on the staff at Rochester and Hollesley Bay Colony and at the OTS, Wakefield. Then I was Deputy Governor at Hindley until 1969.

The purpose of this letter is to send you best wishes and congratulations on the way in which you have been handling the problems at Strangeways.

As one who knows something about prison riots from Canadian experience, I do want to say how very much I admired your strength in seeking, throughout very difficult days of past weeks, to use strength rather than brute strength, at a time when I am sure there must have been clamouring for you to use force. That must have been hard indeed and I most sincerely congratulate you.

I hope that once the dust settles you will be able to have a long rest and see what you did was absolutely right.

Most sincerely
John Lee

(The one good thing brought about by the Manchester troubles is that Press and television coverage appears to have been world-wide. As a result of which, we have had this letter from an old colleague I remember well at Wakefield. So glad to get your letter John. I believe you and I were last together at some course we attended in London - I think it was at Latchmere House. I recall I had trouble with the distributor of my car due to excessive frost and we had to await the AA to get us on our way again. Shortly after that you 'took off' for

Canada. I have often wondered where you were. Now we have you once again 'in the fold' and will be happy to send you further copies of our Retired Governors' Newsletter. With regards the happenings at Strangeways in April last, you will see not everyone over here shares your views - they tell me this is what democracy is all about. Lord Justice Woolf is currently carrying out an extensive enquiry into Strangeways and other 'strange' happenings, so in his wisdom he will no doubt direct us in the correct direction for the future - providing of course it does not interfere with the present political thought - or cost too much money. Please keep in touch - glad to hear from you again.

Arthur Williamson)

Brendan's little effort in the Manchester Saga brought him a large postbag - I must ask him if they were all complimentary - if not perhaps he will publish the others. However, yet another ex-member of our own 'flock' decided she must write and the following is the letter he received at the beginning of April:

Wiltshire County Council,
Social Services Dept, Swindon

As someone who has spent 15 years in the Prison Service as an AG, and now work in a different setting, I thought I would write a note of support to you and your staff at this most difficult time.

Our professional lives are fraught with risk and our management skills have to be a blend of interdependence which makes us all much more vulnerable in the work that we do.

I was at one time Deputy Governor at Styal and so know Manchester well - and also Father Joe Barrett who has spoken of you with great interest in all that you are doing when I met with him earlier this year.

My best wishes to you all at this difficult time.

Sincerely
Judy Gibbons
(Divisional Director)

(Again because of the Strangeways situation we have been able to contact yet another old colleague and have been delighted to invite her to receive the Newsletter in future. Her reply to Brendan's invitation follows:)

Swindon, Wilts

Many thanks for your note and the Retired Governors' Newsletter. It was really nice to receive it with lots of information and letters about people I had known and had no news of for some years.

Although I am not actually retired as I am still working, however now with Wilts Social Services, I have sent the bankers order to my bank to ensure further news.

Many thanks
Judy Gibbons

Gloucester

Thanks for sending the forms. Enclosed with this please find cheque and Order for my Bank. I was going to set up an enquiry into why I had not received copies of the Newsletter for a couple of years. Then it struck me that the last time I wrote complaining that Arthur couldn't spell my surname and I decided to address him as 'Arfur' in future. So perhaps ARTHUR took umbrage?

Here, what's all this about a new tie? There used to be a Borstal Tie. It was a bit like those of the better Regiments of the Line. Then there was the one I had produced. That was a beautiful tie with a tasteful design, naturally. Every tie I sent out was especially blessed by an assortment of drunken Chiefs and Dancing POs. All that was about the time Barry Wigginton, of blessed memory, and yours truly were working to set up a British Prison Governors' Association. I suppose that, with the passing of Chief Officers and the establishing of Heads of This and Heads of That, it was logical that a new tie is required. But I hope the new one is going to have a smaller, less 'loud' design than the one Brendan was wearing on telly. I couldn't take my eyes off it. Quite spoiled the picture of its handsome wearer. What does it mean? The bird looks like that fabled feathered fellow rising from the ashes. But why is he taking that key with him? And what Crown is he about to bang into? I take it the word under the key is some place in Cornwall. Is it? I can't find it in my old Latin dictionary and it isn't even in Moriarty's Police Law nor The Guide to British Deer. Now, the logo on my old tie was 'Sui Generis' and everyone knows what that means. I mean, we've all used the words, "After you with the Sui Generis, Fred".

Talking about Fred, where did Freddy Owen get to, anyone know?

It is sad to read of the passing of so many old friends. I first met Cliff Shoemake when he was at Gloucester and I was at Falfield - NOT Leyhill). I called at Gloucester Prison and he was moving a piano past the old chief's office. A couple of were watching, breathless. I gave him a hand and then turned and cussed the cons for being idle and allowing the Governor to do all the work!

I was a bit put out that Arthur referred to only 'older' ex-Gs knowing David Waddilove. Blimey! David is only 80 and sounds as lively as ever.

I hear from a few older ex-Gs from time to time. Jack Beisty and I write every Cricklemass. Others... well Adrian Arnold drops in now and then. I used to see Roger Dauncey more often than now but he said I needed to see a therapist and whilst many may agree with him, the therapist I went to refused to treat me. Said it was dangerous. I mean, I know insanity is hereditary and you can get it from your children, but she must have thought I'd got mad cows' disease, or something.

Children? Well, my oldest has disappeared into the blue somewhere. If anyone sees him please let me know so I can kill the fatted calf before he gets his hands on it. Ken, the youngest, is now an attorney in San Francisco. I expect to see him in September with his Costa Rican wife, who flies for Pan Am so Ken can get cheap flights and bring with him the two grandsons I haven't seen as yet. His daughter aged twelve years flies to and from Geneva for hols and it don't seem to make her arms ache at all at all.

I note most ex-Gs keep busy. So does Jim. I'm still a Governor, but now of a local school. Appointed by the County Council because of my SLD connections, I keep an eye on the Family Centre at the school. Blimey! We've got some odd families growing up now. I run reunions of my old wartime Parachute battalion, act as Hon Development Officer for the County CPRE, recently given up active work running an MS centre. Now when I feel like doing anything active and physical I lie down and it wears off. This week Beryl, my wife, is helping me judge villages for the Bledisloe Cup. We had excellent winners' plaques done at Coldingley... all the spelling correct too! Now we are hoping they'll do boards of names of winners for the Shire Hall. I've got several other things on the go, including writing a book which may be finished about 2090. In

October I commence an Open University Course.

Mentioning Coldingley reminds me that it was nice to see Keith Gibson is being kept busy. Keith was a good boss to me at SER and, although he didn't know half the troubles I was experiencing, without the generous support he gave me I wouldn't have dealt with any of the problems. He was probably relieved when I left the service a year early. I'm sure some people were pleased. One of the reasons was disillusion with the service as it seemed to be heading.

Arthur, it HAS to change. John Wheeler and I served together at Wandsworth. He is a man of courage. Perhaps his claims that the service will be better privatised is not the complete right answer ... who wants to see anyone making money out of locking people up? ... but there's got to be a change and I only hope that the PGA is conferring about the way the service should go and get in their ideas before anyone else. I write this as the POA announce intentions to go for more industrial action. As a one-time POA member I lost patience with their methods years ago and I reckon their membership may well need to blame themselves if the service changes to their detriment ... I don't mean to give Syd Powell a touch of the vapours ... after all, he and I shared landings a long time ago ... still good-looking isn't he?

Talking about politics, after making two speeches in the House of Lords last year I'm sticking to working behind the scenes. Well, when I say 'in the H of L' in fact I gave a vote of thanks in the Cholmondley Room there! On the first occasion I was at the door introducing people we hoped would support a young people's outward bound type of organisation, to Countess Mountbatten. The only person to get past me without me seeing him was Lord H Wilson, who ducked in under my arm as my back was turned. That was the occasion of my first speech there. I said to Lord H W as I clapped my hand on his shoulder, "Hoi, where do you think you're off to?" But he looked so small and

lost and in need of friendship that I just couldn't do what would have been done on past occasions. Poor little feller. Thought I'd mention that so you know I keep good company when I can.

I was sad to learn of the death of Barbara Parfitt ... regards to Ron. Peter James and I both went after that job in Singapore, but I'd been a policeman there and had been involved at Changi as a soldier and policeman, so Peter went to Singapore. I was there five years ago and, Peter, it's beautiful now; I went, later, to Mauritius for a brief spell.

Ah well. Mustn't go on. But at least Arthur will have something to say about this one!

Kind regards to all. Give a bell if you're around this way chaps, and, of course, chappesses.

J H Absalom

PS Peter James, what DID you say to/about the clergyman? You can tell me!

Jim

(I can assure you Jim that ARFUR did not take umbrage at you incorrectly addressing him. After thirty-five years serving in proper prisons he has had to listen to being called much less complimentary names. So, as long as you continue to send us your interesting and humorous letters, we shall of course always be glad to print them.

I was very interested in your comments about the tie - we now have even had one designed especially for us geriatrics. I didn't even know the real translation of 'Sui Generis' (even though I still have my original cornflower tie), so I will not understand the new motto. I can recommend purchase of the new model to one and all - might even buy one myself. I do hope your letter gets a good response and, if so, we shall print them all - even the rude ones. Thanks Jim.

Arfur Williamson)